
Chemical Safe Schools in RI

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Keep in Mind . . .

- Schools rarely manage chemicals

r e s p o n s i b l y

- You need help
- Business officers are part of the solution

A Brief History of RI's Chemical Safe Schools Program

2001 EPA Workshop got us started

Tale of woe from colleagues

- Poor practices: ordering in bulk
- Poor facilities: shelving, cabinets, locks
- Untrained staff

Getting Help – Resources within the school

OSHA requirement: all labs must have a
Chemical Hygiene Officer

Institutional barriers to compliance:

Contracts, compensation,
\$ for disposal and training

Other Barriers:

Apathy, time, overwhelming task

. . . Not Fun!

Getting Help – Outside Resources

- ❑ State Agencies: overlapping roles
- ❑ Health and Safety Officers:
 1. Colleges, Universities, Hospitals
 2. Private Sector – LEPC* Members
- ❑ Fire Officials and Fire Marshals

**LEPC = Local Emergency Planning Committee*

Committee Successes: Training and Technical Assistance

Manuals

Hard Copy of Essential State Requirements

Templates for Hygiene Plans

Don't Reinvent

Brown University Created CDs

Essential Information

Committee Successes: Inventory Collection and Review

Findings:

- Chemical inventories are fiction

- High % of chemicals no longer used

Solution:

- School Health Regs that restrict >400 hazardous chemicals

Business Officers to the Rescue!

No. 1 - Stop Ordering Chemicals that Don't Belong in Schools

1. Any compounds containing toxic heavy metals like mercury
2. Nitrates and other explosives
3. Sodium and potassium metal
4. Lecture bottles of chlorine, hydrogen and oxygen gas
5. Ether
6. Formaldehyde/formalin
7. Toxic Solvents: BTX (**B**enzene, **T**oluene, **X**ylenes)

Business Officers to the Rescue!

No. 2 - Empower Chemical Hygiene Officers -

CHOs can:

- Review orders from labs;
Also, art, maintenance, shops, etc.
- Check orders against RI regs
(www.healthri.gov/hsr/regulations/proposed/schoolhealth-prop.pdf)

Business Officers to the Rescue!

No. 3 – Budgets for Next Year

Require any program using chemicals to include:

- ✓ Training for CHO
- ✓ Maintaining Safe Facilities
- ✓ Disposal

Keep in Mind . . .

- Schools can manage chemicals responsibly
- Business officers are part of the solution
- You have help